

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 229466

21

ORIGIN INR-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-08 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13

PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00

SAJ-01 SAM-01 /092 R

DRAFTED BY INR/RSE:JSONTAG:CAD

APPROVED BY INR/DD:RKIRK

INR/RSE:PCOOK

INR/REA:HEHOROWITZ

EA/PRCM:RHART

EUR/SOV:SMCCALL

NEA:AGRIFFIN

EUR:AHUGHES

AF:RTIERNEY

----- 024772

R 161745Z SEP 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 229466

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

SECRET STATE 229466

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CH, UR, PINT, PFOR

SUBJECT: SOVIET POLICY TOWARD CHINA AFTER MAO

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF INR REPORT NO. 585, "SOVIET POLICY TOWARD CHINA AFTER MAO," DATED SEPTEMBER 13, 1976.

2. THE ANTAGONISMS AND RIVALRIES THAT CAUSED SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS TO DETERIORATE TO THEIR CURRENT STATE ARE NOT LIKELY TO DISAPPEAR WITH THE PASSING OF MAO. MOREOVER, EACH SIDE HOLDS THE OTHER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EXISTING HOSTILITY; NEITHER WILL BE WILLING TO ACKNOWLEDGE FAULT BY HASTILY ABANDONING LONGSTANDING POSITIONS.

3. AS MUCH AS BOTH COUNTRIES WOULD THEORETICALLY LIKE TO ALTER A SITUATION SO DETRIMENTAL TO THEIR OWN INTERESTS AND FAVORABLE TO THE US, THE BITTERNESS WHICH HAS LONG POISONED RELATIONS CAN ONLY BE EASED GRADUALLY. EVEN GIVEN A MUTUAL WILL TO COMPROMISE, THE PROCESS WILL TAKE YEARS.

4. FROM MOSCOW'S PERSPECTIVE, THERE ARE STRONG REASONS FOR MOVING SLOWLY IN THE IMMEDIATE POST-MAO PERIOD,

PRIMARILY BECAUSE THE USSR EXPECTS AN EXTENDED INTER-REGNUM FOLLOWING MAO'S DEMISE. SOVIET STATEMENTS INDICATE THAT MOSCOW HAS CONCLUDED THAT NO INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP IN THE PRC HAS BEEN ABLE TO ACCUMULATE SUFFICIENT POWER TO EFFECT A SMOOTH TRANSITION, AND THAT A LONG PERIOD OF MANEUVER AND STRUGGLE WILL PRECEDE THE ACCESSION OF A NEW REGIME CAPABLE OF EXERTING UNQUESTIONED AUTHORITY

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 229466

OVER THE COUNTRY AND THE PARTY.

5. INITIAL RESPONSES:

6. WHILE REGARDING THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING MAO'S DEATH AS ONE OF INITIAL SKIRMISHES PRELIMINARY TO FULL-SCALE POLITICAL COMBAT, THE USSR WILL STILL WANT TO REGISTER ITS INTEREST IN IMPROVED RELATIONS

AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, BOTH TO KEEP OPEN ITS LINES OF COMMUNICATION WITH PEKING AND TO DETER FURTHER US-CHINESE RAPPROCHEMENT. TO THAT END MOSCOW WILL PROBABLY:

(A)--REVIVE CERTAIN OLD PROPOSALS SUCH AS A NON-AGGRESSION PACT, A NONUSE OF FORCE TREATY, AND A JOINT AGREEMENT TO CONDUCT RELATIONS ON THE BASIS OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE, ALL OF WHICH HAVE BEEN ON THE RECORD SINCE THE EARLY 1970'S; AND

(B)--OFFER TO EXPAND TRADE AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES IN AN EFFORT BOTH TO DEMONSTRATE GOOD FAITH AND TO PROBE FOR SIGNS OF RESPONSIVENESS FROM ONE OR ANOTHER FACTION IN PEKING.

SUCH STEPS WOULD BE TAKEN LARGELY TO TEST THE MOOD IN PEKING FOR MORE SUBSTANTIAL EXCHANGES AT A LATER DATE. (IF PAST BEHAVIOR IS ANY GUIDE, THEY ARE ALSO LIKELY TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY SELF-JUSTIFYING RHETORIC AND IDEOLOGICAL FORMULATIONS MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR ANY CHINESE GOVERNMENT TO RESPOND GRACIOUSLY, MUCH LESS FAVORABLY.) MOSCOW'S FIRST RESPONSE TO THE DEATH OF MAO HAS BEEN TO REITERATE THAT PEKING IS TO BLAME FOR THE CURRENT STATE OF RELATIONS, SUGGESTING THAT THE USSR WILL TAKE ITS TIME TO ASSESS THE SITUATION BEFORE TAKING ANY NEW INITIATIVES.

7. HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS:

8. OVER THE LONGER RUN, MOSCOW'S ASSESSMENT OF THE CHINESE DOMESTIC SCENE STANDS TO BE STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY SOVIET EXPERIENCE WITH THE PASSING OF LENIN AND STALIN. AS WITH MAO, LENIN'S DAY-TO-DAY CONTROL OVER AFFAIRS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 229466

DIMINISHED AS HIS HEALTH DETERIORATED; YET, NO SINGLE SUCCESSOR WAS GROOMED; THE RESULTANT FIGHT FOR HIS MANTLE CONVULSED THE PARTY FOR YEARS. SIMILARLY, STALIN MADE NO PROVISION FOR AN ORDERLY SUCCESSION, AND HIS DEPARTURE ALSO SPARKED LENGTHY STRUGGLES FOR POWER. BOTH TRANSITION PERIODS IN THE USSR WERE MARKED BY RUTHLESS AND UNPRINCIPLED MANIPULATION OF THE MAJOR POLITICAL ISSUES AND CHOICES FACING THE COUNTRY AT THE TIME. THESES AND PROGRAMS WERE SEIZED UPON AS A MEANS OF ACHIEVING POWER, AND POSITIONS ADOPTED OR DISCARDED WITHOUT REGARD TO THEIR MERIT IN THE SCRAMBLE FOR POLITICAL DOMINATION.

9. AS A RESULT OF THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE, THE SOVIETS ARE THUS LIKELY TO PLACE LITTLE STOCK IN THE ANNOUNCED INTEN-

TIONS AND PROGRAMS OF THE CONTENDING FACTIONS WITHIN CHINA AND WILL EXPECT ULTIMATE SUCCESS TO COME TO THE MOST SKILLFUL TACTICIAN, THE ONE WHO CAN MANIPULATE ISSUES MOST ADROITLY. THE SOVIET UNION WILL HOPE EVENTUALLY TO PIECE TOGETHER A CLEAR ENOUGH PICTURE OF THE CONTENDERS TO BE ABLE TO INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME OF THE POWER STRUGGLE BY OFFERING POLITICAL CONCESSIONS TO THAT INDIVIDUAL OR FACTION MOST LIKELY TO RESPOND FAVORABLY.

10. COMPLEXITIES PERCEIVED:

11. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE MODERATE OR RADICAL (OR LEFT-RIGHT) LABEL WILL COUNT FOR MUCH IN THE SOVIET ASSESSMENT. RECENT COMMENTARY DOES REFLECT A CAUTIOUSLY FAVORABLE VIEW OF THE SO-CALLED "PRAGMATISTS," OR AT LEAST OF A SUBGROUP OF SEEMING MODERATES INCLUDING HUA KUO-FENG. FURTHERMORE, SOVIET WRITINGS IN RECENT YEARS SHOW ON BALANCE A PREFERENCE FOR THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH MORE MODERATE VIEWS, AND A TENDENCY TO EQUATE THE SO-CALLED RADICALS WITH AN UNRELENTINGLY ANTI-SOVIET LINE.

12. THIS SIMPLISTIC VIEW OF CURRENT CHINESE POLITICS WILL LIKELY HAVE LITTLE APPLICABILITY NOW, HOWEVER, AS THE NEATNESS OF A BIFURCATED VIEW OF FACTIONS GIVES WAY TO THE REALITY OF A COMPLEX AND NUANCED MANEUVERING  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 229466

FOR POWER. MOSCOW ALREADY CALCULATES THAT BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE PRAGMATIST-RADICAL DICHOTOMY LIES A COMPLEX WEB OF INTERRELATIONSHIPS WHICH WILL EMERGE INTO THE LIGHT ONLY AS THE SUCCESSION STRUGGLE DEVELOPS. THE SOVIET LEADERS, THEREFORE, PROBABLY FEEL THAT THEIR GRASP OF FACTIONAL ALIGNMENTS AND THE OVERALL POLITICAL SITUATION IN CHINA IS TOO TENUOUS TO MAKE POLICY DECISIONS ON THE BASIS OF PRESUMED CURRENT AFFILIATIONS.

13. SOVIET CAUTION AND IGNORANCE:

14. MOSCOW'S CAUTIOUSNESS IN ASSESSING CHINA TODAY AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE IS PROBABLY THE RESULT OF EQUAL PARTS OF IGNORANCE AND UNCERTAINTY. WHAT LITTLE IS KNOWN OF THE DEPTH OF SOVIET KNOWLEDGE OF CHINESE POLITICAL LIFE OR OF SOVIET ACCESS TO CHINESE POLITICAL FIGURES SUGGESTS THAT THE USSR DOES NOT HAVE A FRIEND IN COURT IN PEKING, AND MAY NOT BE ANY BETTER INFORMED ON CHINESE AFFAIRS THAN IS THE US--PERHAPS EVEN LESS. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SOVIET COMMENTARY DOES NOT INDICATE THAT MOSCOW HAS BEEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY STABLE POLITICAL GROUPINGS IN THE PRC WITH ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS; RATHER,

IT NOW SEEMS TO SEE ONLY FRAGMENTED POLITICAL LEADERSHIP  
WITH LITTLE COHERENCE OR UNITY BEHIND THE FACILE MODERATE-  
LEFTIST DICHOTOMY.

15. GIVEN THIS SOVIET PERCEPTION OF CHINESE AFFAIRS, IT  
SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THE USSR WILL WANT, OR BE ABLE,  
TO MOVE WITH ANY SPEED OR DECISIVENESS IN THE IMMEDIATE  
POST-MAO PERIOD TO REVISE ITS POLICIES OR ALTER ITS  
PRINCIPLES IN DEALING WITH CHINA. THE SOVIET LEADERS

WILL PROBABLY BE GROPING TO PUT TOGETHER EVEN A RUDI-  
MENTARY PICTURE OF STRUCTURE AND TRENDS IN THE PRC,  
AND THEY WILL BE HESITANT TO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO ANY  
MAJOR CHANGES IN PRESENT POLICY LINES.

16. SOVIET CHINA WATCHERS SPEAK OF A SUCCESSION STRUGGLE  
LASTING AS LONG AS 10 YEARS. SINCE MOSCOW OBVIOUSLY  
HOPES TO BE ABLE TO INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME OF THAT STRUGGLE,  
IT IS LIKELY THAT SOME TIME WILL PASS BEFORE THE SOVIET

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 229466

LEADERS FEEL SUFFICIENTLY CONFIDENT TO BEGIN STRUCTURING  
A NEW PROGRAM OF CONCESSIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR PEKING'S  
CONSIDERATION. HABIB

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLITICAL STABILITY, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 16 SEP 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976STATE229466  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** JSONTAG:CAD  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760351-0188  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760952/aaaabsjm.tel  
**Line Count:** 251  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN INR  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 5  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 22 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <22 APR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <16 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SOVIET POLICY TOWARD CHINA AFTER MAO  
**TAGS:** PINT, PFOR, PINR, CH, UR  
**To:** BONN CAIRO HONG KONG MULTIPLE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006